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# ABROAD

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## WARSAW

### *Second Motive*

Pope John Paul II's recent trip to Poland, his third since his elevation to the Holy See, had another motive besides that of strengthening the Church in his native country, according to diplomats here. The Pope has been anxious for some time to visit the Soviet Union. He especially wants to see the Roman Catholic communities of Lithuania, which are celebrating the six-hundredth anniversary of Lithuania's acceptance of obedience to Rome and dynastic union with Poland. During his travels in Poland, the Pope wanted to show the Soviets that he could move about a Communist country, speaking and acting with relative freedom, while not creating a disturbance or provoking strong, overt expressions of political dissatisfaction.

## MOSCOW

### *Hard Drinking*

The state's war against drinking has gone into high gear with a decree from the Supreme Soviet stipulating up to two years of forced labor plus fines of two hundred to five hundred rubles for clandestine distilling, until now practically a sport in the Soviet Union. Hitherto, miscreants were let off with nominal fines, and there was no question of incarceration. The new decree is specific only about the manufacture of liquor for home consumption. But measures punishing the production of moonshine for public sale would surely be considerably more severe.

## LA PAZ

### *Royalty*

The king and queen of Spain recently paid an official visit to this remote Andean capital, the first time the head of the Spanish state has ever been in Bolivia, a country the Spaniards colonized four centuries ago. The visit was part of an ever widening series the Spanish royal family has been conducting for several years in Latin America. The occasion produced more than good will: The Spanish government has authorized aid worth \$5 million to Bolivia in the framework of Latin American cooperation. The visit was slightly marred by incidents of violence stemming from a miners' strike. During the king's appearance before the Bolivian parliament, three radical deputies held up a sign that read, "We are still suffering from colonial poverty." Bolivia has been independent since 1825. Applause greeted the king when he said that Spain considered Bolivia "a priority country" in its foreign-aid program.

## LONDON

### *Redemption*

Ninety years ago, the Chinese government began issuing sterling bonds for sale to Western investors in order to finance various projects for which hard currency was necessary. This practice was continued in the 1930s by the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek, which used part of the money in a fruitless attempt to wipe out Communist military opposition. The government began to renege on repayment of capital and interest at the time of the Japanese invasion of China in 1937. Since then, the bonds have been no more than orange-engraved scraps of paper, but their existence prevented the People's Republic

of China from entering the powerful London bond market until they were redeemed. China has instead been selling bonds in the Japanese market to finance many of its capital projects. But borrowing in Tokyo is no longer cheap, and recently Chinese bonds have been denominated in yen, which ties Chinese indebtedness to fluctuations of a foreign currency. Now Peking has decided that it wants access to London badly enough that it is prepared to redeem the bonds, whose face value is \$100 million.

## PARIS

### *The Private Sector*

France is about to follow the American example of encouraging private sponsorship of cultural, scientific, and social programs with tax deductions, according to legislation introduced recently in the National Assembly. The first such project, repairs to the foundation of the Arc de Triomphe, will be paid for in large part by American Express. "General de Gaulle and the Unknown Soldier [whose eternal flame burns beneath the arch] might well turn in their graves," commented *Le Monde*. Already government cultural authorities are looking forward to private-sector help for a number of projects, including the controversial glass pyramid that is to fill the courtyard of the Louvre.

## PEKING

### *Beside the Pandas*

In the remote mountains of west-central China (and in a few Western zoos), the giant panda precariously holds its own. This year is particularly perilous for this magical beast because arrow bamboo and Chinese pink bamboo, the two staples of the panda diet, have begun their fifty-year cyclical flowering, after which the plants die and regenerate from seed. At the elaborate Wolong Panda Center, which has a breeding farm and laboratories for studying the animals' life cycle, there has been intense activity to ensure the pandas' survival. Two decades ago, during the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, more than a hundred pandas died during a similar bamboo flowering, simply because there was lack of interest in their preservation. But pandas are only part of the country's new-found enthusiasm for preserving wildlife. China has also turned its attention to other threatened species: the black-necked crane, the beaked White Flag dolphin, the Yangtze River alligator, two species of tiger, the black gibbon of Hainan Island, and the azure-winged magpie.



"Too bad, gentlemen—I happen to be wearing my Swiss Army suit."



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